

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 04326 210755Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7196

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, TS

SUBJ: BEN SALAHISTS' TRIAL CONTINUES

REF: TUNIS 4186

1. WITH DAILY COURT SESSIONS, THE GOT'S TRIAL OF 33 BEN SALAHISTS HAS ENTERED ITS SECOND WEEK. THUS FAR, PROCEEDINGS HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO INTERROGATION OF ACCUSED BY PRESIDNG JUDGE. HIS QUESTIONING OF THE DEFENDANTS ONE BY ONE HAS CENTERED ON THEIR ACTIVITIES IN TUNISIA AND FRANCE FOR THE PREPARATION OF TRACTS, THE COLLECTION OF FUNDS, AND THE ORGANIZATION OF CELLS.

2. ALL DEFENDANTS HAVE MAINTAINED THAT THEIR PERIODIC MEETINGS WERE INFORMAL GET-TOGETHERS FOR THE PRUPOSE OF QUOTE SELF-CRITICISM END QUOTE AND ANALYSIS OF THE FAILURE OF SOCIALIST POLICY IN THE 1960S. THEY HAVE ADMITTED PREPARING A DRAFT MANIFESTO IN 1974 THAT THEY INTENDED AS AN OVERALL CRITIQUE BUT CLAIM THAT WHEN THIS LONG TRACT RETURNED FROM PRINTING IN PARIS IT NO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 TUNIS 04326 210755Z

LONGER RESEMBLED WHAT THEY HAD WRITTEN. THE DEFENDANTS HAVE ASSERTED THAT THEIR FINANCIAL DEALINGS WERE ENTIRELY FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE FAMILIES OF BEN SALAH ASSOCIATES IMPRISONED AFTER 1971. DEFENDANTS HAVE NOT ALLEGED THAT THEY WERE TORTURED DURING POLICE INTERROGATION BUT SOME HAVE MADE STATEMENTS IN COURT THAT INTERROGATION PLACED GREAT PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STRAIN

ON THEM.

3. PRESS REPORTS HAVE YET TO INDICATE THAT COURT HAS
EXAMINED ANY EVIDENCE OF CHARGES OF SERIOUS SUBVERSION
AGAINST THE STATE. POLITICALLY CONSCIOUS TUNISIANS
HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY THE APPARENT INNOCUOUS NATURE OF
BEN SALAHISTS' ANTI-REGIME ACTIVITIES AND REGARD THE GOVERN-
MENT'S CHARGES AGAINST THEM AS OVERDRAWN. SOME OF THE MORE
PROMINENT DEFENDANTS, HOWEVER, ARE YET TO BE QUESTIONED IN
COURT AND MORE SERIOUS EVIDENCE MAY BE PRODUCED SHORTLY.
MULCAHY

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PAGE 03 TUNIS 04326 210755Z

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Message Attributes

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